

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 10564 201525Z
ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1006
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABARONE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 10564

E.O. 11652: GDS 12/31/82
TAGS: ELTN, EAID, CG, XA
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN AFRICA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

REF: STATE 271353

1. POST FEELS THAT SUBJECT ANALYSIS OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN RAILWAY SYSTEM IS INCOMPLETE DUE TO OMISSION OF ZAIRIAN TRANSIT TRAFFIC THROUGH SOUTHERN AFRICA. ZAIRE'S MINERAL-PRODUCING SHABA REGION HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT USER OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN RAILWAY SYSTEM SINCE THE CLOSURE OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD; ZAIRE'S OWN VOIE NATIONALE, AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE FOR GOODS DESTINED TO OR FROM SHABA IS NOT CAPABLE OF MEETING SHABA'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS UNASSISTED DUE TO INSUFFICIENT CAPACITY AND POOR MANAGEMENT. SHABA CURRENTLY IMPORTS GOODS VIA DAR ES SALAAM AND SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS (WHICH NECESSITATES TRANSIT OF
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 10564 201525Z

RHODESIA); SHABA ALSO IMPORTS A SUBSTANTIAL VOLUME OF GOODS ORIGINATING IN SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA. SHABA'S MINERAL EXPORTS (WHICH EARN TWO-THIRDS OF ZAIRE'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE) ALSO USE THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM. APPROXIMATELY HALF OF ZAIRE'S COPPER IS CURRENTLY EXPORTED VIA RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. WE FEEL THAT ZAIRE'S USE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN

TRANSPORT NETWORK WAS UNDERESTIMATED IN ASSESSING PRESENT AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS.

2. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT HAS CAUSED ZAIRE TO TURN TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM IS THE VOIE NATIONALE'S INABILITY TO HANDLE THE TRAFFIC. THEREFORE, IT IS LOGICAL THAT THE VOIE NATIONALE BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF ANY FUTURE STUDIES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRANSPORT NETWORK, SINCE CONDITIONS ON THE VOIE NATIONALE AFFECT THE ZAIRIAN TRAFFIC DIRECTED TO SOUTHERN AFRICA.

3. POST AGREES WITH CONCLUSION A, PARA 2, IN REFTEL TO THE EFFECT THAT MAJOR NEW INTERREGIONAL TRUNK ROAD AND RAIL TRANSPORT ROUTES ARE NOT REQUIRED ON PURELY ECONOMIC GROUNDS. WE DO NOT AGREE WITH CONCLUSION B, THAT "EXISTING INTERREGIONAL TRUNK ROAD AND RAIL TRANSPORT ROUTES DO NOT REQUIRE MAJOR REHABILITATION," SINCE WE FEEL THAT ZAIRE'S VOIE NATIONALE SHOULD BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF ANY SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRANSPORT STUDY; THE VOIE NATIONALE IS IN NEED OF REHABILITATION AND MAJOR UP-GRADING. EVEN WITH THE CURRENT LOW IMPORT LEVELS CAUSED BY ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, THE VOIE NATIONALE IS CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT. REOPENING OF THE BENGUELA WOULD IMPROVE THE SITUATION, BUT ZAIRE WOULD CONTINUE TO RELY ON THE SOUTHERN ROUTE FOR ITS SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTS FROM RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA.
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